

Social constructs: different countries, different eras
Differences in portrayals of Jane, Elizabeth and Lydia Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-2013)

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Jane Austenin <i>Ylpeys ja ennakkoluulo</i> (1813) on yksi maailman kuuluisimmista kirjallisuuden klassikoista. Teoksen aihepiirin vuoksi siitä on myös tullut kohde monipuolisille ja erilaisille adaptaatioille. Yksi <i>Ylpeys ja ennakkoluulo</i> -teoksen moderneimmista adaptaatioista on YouTubeista löytyvä videoblogisarja <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i> (2012-2013).</p> <p>Tutkimukseni pääasialliset lähteet olivat romaani <i>Ylpeys ja ennakkoluulo</i> sekä videoblogisarja <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i>. Tavoitteenani oli vertailla teosten kolmea naishahmoa Jane, Elizabeth ja Lydia Bennetiä tutkien hahmoissa tapahtuneita muutoksia kirjasta videoblogisarjaan. Tutkin muutoksia huomioiden etenkin naisten aseman englantilaisessa yhteiskunnassa alkuperäisteoksen aikakautena verrattuna nykypäivään ja Yhdysvaltoihin, johon <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i> sijoittuu. Myös hahmojen väliset sosiaaliset suhteet olivat tutkimukseni keskiössä.</p> <p>Keskityin analyysissäni teosten kolmeen kohtaukseen, joissa sekä sisarusten sosiaaliset suhteet että aikakausten erot olivat parhaiten analysoitavissa. Kohtauksissa aikakausten erot näkyivät etenkin sisarusten välisen kanssakäymisen lähentymisenä ja tunteikkuutena <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i>issa. Myös alkuperäisteoksen yksi suurimmista käännekohtista, Lydian esiaviollinen seksi sekä naimisiin karkaaminen, muutettiin adaptaatiossa nykypäivään sopivammaksi tabuksi.</p> <p>Tutkielmani tulokset osoittivat hahmojen muuttuneen itsenäisemmiksi yhteiskunnassa tapahtuneiden muutosten vuoksi. Etenkin Lydian hahmon kehitys <i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i>issa <i>Ylpeys ja ennakkoluulo</i> -teokseen verrattuna oli merkittävä, sillä hahmo muuttui harkitsemattomasta teinistä jopa samaistuttavaksi hahmoksi.</p> <p><i>The Lizzie Bennet Diaries</i> oli monien eri sosiaalisten medioiden projekti. YouTubeen lisäksi sarjan hahmoilla oli muun muassa omat Twitter-tilinsä, joiden kautta he kommunikoiivat. Tätä adaptaatiota voisi siis tutkia myös esimerkiksi sosiaalisen median näkökannalta.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Many studies and adaptations have been made based on Jane Austen's novels, as Austen is one of the most famous authors in the world. One of Austen's most distinguished works *Pride and Prejudice* has been the subject of many of these studies and adaptations.

“*Pride and Prejudice* focuses on the importance of marriage to the lives of women of the gentry in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England.” (Teachman 1997: 85). In addition to marriage, Teachman (1997: 1) also states decency and class to be other important themes in the novel. A YouTube video blog adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* called *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* also deals with these subjects, though in present day United States.

Women's social, economic and legal positions have changed remarkably in the two hundred years that have passed between the publications of the two works. Thus, I chose to compare aspects such as the aforementioned importance of marriage between *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. This will be done with the aid of three key female characters; especially since all of Austen's central characters are women (Dobie 2003: 248).

As mentioned before, there have been many different adaptations of Austen's novels. One reason for this might be the engaging characters with rich and versatile personalities. Perry (2003: 213) mentions modern filmmakers possibly appreciating the freedom of interpretation that Austen's novels allow regarding fitting a physical appearance to a character's moral characteristics. This is one of the matters I will consider regarding my three chosen characters, as there have been physical and cultural adjustments made to adapt the story of *Pride and Prejudice* to the modern day. Another point of focus will be the characters' relationships with each other as sisters.

The main focus of this thesis will thus be the alterations that have been made to the story and characters of *Pride and Prejudice* in order for *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* to be a story of the twenty-first century. One of the reasons why *Pride and Prejudice* can be so well adapted into modern times is its timeless themes. As Teachman (1997: 1) points out, Austen's themes

... are not merely issues of historical significance; they retain their relevance as we move into the twenty-first century, still trying to determine how best to deal with issues of love, money

(or the lack of it), and proper behavior in a world that resists simple solutions to complicated issues.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As this thesis involves the same female characters at the forefront of the analysis in different eras, environments and cultures, it is important to consider the notion of identity as well as gender. Furthermore, as the values and practices of the world regarding women's issues have changed in Western cultures, it is also important to consider the changes that have happened in relation to those matters from the eighteenth century to the present day.

2.1 Identity and gender

In the past, gender was seen as a feminine/masculine binary and as a repertory of demeanors enforced by the society on individuals (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002: 5-6). Today, the perception of gender is varied as diversity is acknowledged and a distinction between biological sex and social gender is seen as deficient (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002: 5). The visual media plentifully represents the person of woman, though the complex forms of gender have for a long time been a part of Western cultures and they now examine these gender forms more clearly than ever (Evans 2011: 607). Jane Austen did not always follow the gender norms and rules of her time for female characters, who were expected to be soft and weak; her characters are often strong, educated and psychologically equal to their male companions (Harris 1998: 94).

Identity may be conceptualised “as a series of choices one continually makes about oneself and one’s lifestyle, thus as a process, rather than a state or set of personal attributes” (Litosseliti & Sunderland 2002: 7). On the contrary to the past, social identity today is not regarded as much tied to what one does such as marries, has sex, or has children, as it is regarded as what one is. (Teachman 1997: 152). Additionally, at the present women's identities are not as much tied to their relations to men as was the case two hundred years ago. However, even today women's identities are much more bound to their relations to men rather than the other way around (Teachman 1997: 141).

Thus, regarding both gender and identity from women's point of view; it can be seen that even in the aforementioned issues women are often conceptualized by comparing them to men. This implies

for instance that a woman's weakness is recognized because of a man's strength. The juxtaposition of the sexes can be seen even more clearly when regarding societal issues.

2.2 Women's issues then and now

Some of the themes raised by *Pride and Prejudice* are: the legalities of marriage, choosing a mate and its consequences, sexuality and its morality, a single woman in a society designed for men, and education in the culture of the era (Teachman 1997: 141). At the time Austen was writing her books, the liberation of women was in its early stages. With her narrational style and the society depicted in her novels, Austen showed her support for women's rights in economic independence, social and legal issues (Kelly 1998: 24). Not until the end of the twentieth century, however, has the law begun to recognise women “in matters of divorce, family property, equivalent work and equal pay” (Perkin 1989: 2).

Regarding the differences between men and women in the society of eighteenth century England, women had far less rights, choices and possibilities in every aspect of life. With family inheritance for example, the money and property would go to a brother (Teachman 1997:4). In cases when there were no sons, the assets went to the nearest male relative, as in the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, where the assets of the main female characters go to their father's cousin Mr Collins. Women also had few options in funding their lives if they were not married or provided for by a family member. Working as a teacher was one option. However, this usually meant a lowering of one's social status and barely enough money to cope with. Most women of the gentry and aristocracy were thus expected to marry an economically creditable man that could provide for the family (Teachman 1997: 4). This might be one of the reasons why all of Jane Austen's novels rely on the marriage plot; a plot with marriage as the fundamental centre and conclusion of the story (Mooneyham White 1998: 71); there were few other options for a happy ending for a female main character.

One of the biggest differences when it comes to the stances on marriage in Jane Austen's time in contrast to the twenty-first century, is that marriage is no longer seen as necessary for a woman to ensure her coping in life. Thus, when adapting *Pride and Prejudice* into *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the creators took this into consideration and changed the marriage plot into something more fitting for young adults getting to know and fancying each other in the twenty-first century: dating.

In the past several decades, there has been a clear sexualisation of culture (Evans 2011: 607). When this culture is then combined with dating: "...an active sexual identity is demanded of citizens from an early age." (Evans 2011: 608). Ergo, at the present time courtship, sex and sexuality are thought of quite differently compared to two hundred years ago. Women's sexual freedoms have especially changed dramatically towards the twenty-first century as single women of the eighteenth century were expected to act in a virtuous manner, meaning that "any woman who engaged in sexual activity or even the appearance of sexual activity without marriage was considered 'fallen.'" (Teachman 1997: 99). Acting inappropriately would thus lead to not presumably ever being able to marry let alone have a profession of any kind.

There are plenty more choices when it comes to the professional and sexual choices women have in today's time contra Austen's. Women are able to get a higher education and are not only tied to certain fields of employment (Teachman 1997: 151). Also, education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was more dependent on the circumstances of the family. A son in a well-to-do family was often able to go to university for a career or societal purposes. However, a daughter's academic education was not possible due to her sex. The education women could have at the time was given to them by their mothers or teachers (Teachman 1997: 109-110). And although decency is still valued in matters concerning sex and sexuality, "a single woman who is active sexually is no longer considered 'fallen'; her future is not irrevocably determined by her sexual past." (Teachman 1997: 151).

Sexuality, sexual activity and its consequences are at the forefront in both *Pride and Prejudice* as well as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* due to the character Lydia's escapades. In the nineteenth century, however, sex was thought of as enjoyable only for men, thus not considered important for the women who did not marry. Although sexual decency is still considered important in the world, having sex before marriage does not ruin a reputation at least in most Western cultures as it would have done in the past. However, still "A woman's reputation in regard to respectability continues to be based, to a large extent, on the degree to which she remains chaste" (Teachman 1997: 153). When speaking of chastity and celibacy now, both men and women are considered. However, "in Austen's time, chastity was considered to be a given for respectable single women, but not for single men." (Teachman 1997:154-155).

3. RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

This research compares and analyses the differences in the social relationships and portrayals of the main female characters of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* and the YouTube video blog adaptation *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. The differences are compared with specific consideration to the different time periods of the works.

My research aims on providing answers to these questions:

1. What are the main differences in the portrayals and roles of women in the book versus the video blog adaptation?
2. How does the time period especially affect the aforementioned differences in social relationships?

4. DATA AND METHODS

4.1 Chosen data

The two primary sources of data for this study are the novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen and a YouTube video blog adaptation series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-2013) by Hank Green and Bernie Su. Three corresponding scenes from the book and the series were selected for my comparison and analysis. These three scenes are according to the novel: Elizabeth getting a letter from Jane telling her that Lydia has run away with Wickham, Jane and Elizabeth discussing what has happened, and finally Elizabeth finding out that Darcy has paid for the wedding between Lydia and Wickham to be arranged when the couple have come to the Bennets' family home Longbourn.

The analysis section has been divided into four parts. In the first part of the analysis, I will introduce the plots of the scenes as well as the characters most important for my analysis: the two oldest Bennet sisters Jane and Elizabeth, and their youngest sister Lydia; Elizabeth being the main character.

The next three parts are divided by the events mentioned above. In these three parts I analyse the main differences between the novel and the YouTube series in the portrayals of the characters and their relationships according to themes such as class, socio-economic positions, education, morality, marriage and love in different societies and eras. The study also includes analysis on the events of the works where the differences in the time period, plot and characters are most salient.

Interactions between the sisters are on the foreground in the three scenes of the works. The interactions show a great deal of differences between the works, especially as relationships are discussed as time has affected how they are perceived.

4.2 The method of analysis

I have chosen critical discourse analysis (CDA) as my method of analysis. The aim of CDA has been described as

to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. (Fairclough 1995, as quoted by Locke 2004: 1)

My study focuses on social and cultural structures of two works using two different mediums of storytelling (text and audiovisual). The works also deal with different historical situations in different cultural environments, but as the characters are fundamentally the same, identity is also important in relation to my method of analysis. As Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 45) state

CDA remains an approach firmly rooted in a historical, political and ideological view of the social world and explicitly deals with ‘big’ concerns such as power and social structure, and for this reason ‘identity’ in CDA, whilst realised at the micro-discursive level, tends to be treated as an index or expression of an ideological position.

As language is the main method of storytelling in both of my works; written in one, spoken in the other; it is also essential for me to assess the use of language to a certain extent. This is due to the fact that

... language is *radically* contextual. It is not just a matter of context affecting the system, the system has no existence outside a context. Thus language cannot be abstracted from time and space, or from the extralinguistic dimensions of the situation in which it is embedded. (Cameron 1992, as quoted by Swann 2002: 46)

5. FROM A BOOKWORM TO A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

5.1 The plot of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-2013) and key characters

The novel *Pride and Prejudice* is set in early nineteenth century England and follows the life of the Bennet family. The family daughters are at the forefront of the story as their mother wants to see them marry well because the family has no sons that can inherit the father's estate and assets. In fact, all of the young women in *Pride and Prejudice* need to marry in order to secure their futures as they would become poor after their parents' deaths (Teachman 1997: 87). The second eldest daughter, 20-year-old Elizabeth, is the quick-witted and intelligent main character of the story, which follows her dealings with a proud and reserved man, Mr Darcy. The eldest daughter Jane, who is a kind and humble person, has her romantic interest in Darcy's friend Bingley. The youngest daughter Lydia is interested in everyone, but finally ends up with a dubious character called Wickham.

The web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is set in the early twenty-first century in the United States. The series consists of video blogs made by Lizzie Bennet, a 24-year-old graduate student, who tells her viewers about her life through the video blogs. Other characters appear in the videos as well, but some are presented and acted out by Lizzie and the others. The character most often depicted by Elizabeth is her mother, who does not appear in the series.

The most notable difference between the works is that one is a written novel and the other an audio-visual video series. The narrative styles are different as well. Austen uses third-person narrative mode, a considerable extent of free indirect discourse and the thoughts of the protagonist in her novels. In the web series, Lizzie herself is the first person narrator, as are her guests or the other characters, when they appear in the video blogs.

5.2 Elizabeth gets a letter and a call

The events in the novel start when Elizabeth, while preparing for a walk receives two letters from her sister Jane. The first letter had gotten lost in the mail and so it was a few days late. The letter

contained information about their family parties and other engagements as well as the information of Lydia's elopement with Wickham. In the second letter, Jane tells Elizabeth about the family's suspicions that Wickham had never intended for him and Lydia to get married in the first place. After this, Darcy appears at the door and eases Elizabeth's departure from her uncle's home (Austen 1813/2008: 436-445). In *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* the same events are told so that Lizzie, who is in Darcy's company headquarters and has just been asked by Darcy to come join him to see a play, gets a phone call from her best friend Charlotte, telling Lizzie that Lydia and Wickham have made a sextape that is about to be published on a website. After this Lizzie decides to hurry back home and is helped by Darcy (2013: Episode 84).

As the novel was originally written in 1813 and is based on that time period in England and the web series started in 2012 and is based on that time period in the United States, the settings of the events are somewhat different. In the web series, Lizzie is away from home, interning at different companies, of which the last one, where the events of episode 84 are set, is Pemberley Digital - owned by Darcy. In the novel, Elizabeth is visiting her uncle and is thus in an upper-middle-class eighteenth-century home when reading the letters. Elizabeth's uncle's status of being upper-middle-class can be concluded as he is in the trade business and is the brother of Elizabeth's mother, who is also of middle class (Austen 1813/2008: 49). Elizabeth herself is considered upper class as her father is a landowner and thus part of the upper class, although he married beneath his own class. When later in the novel talking about Darcy and herself, Elizabeth says, "He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal" (Austen 1813/2008: 573). After this Elizabeth's conversational partner makes a remark about Elizabeth's mother's side: "True. You are a gentleman's daughter. But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition." (Austen 1813/2008: 573-574). This shows that Elizabeth is considered of a lower class than Darcy by the upper classes. In the video blog series, this is shown as Lizzie's economic situation is often referenced. For example, at the beginning of episode 84 Lizzie shows her new phone while also mentioning, "Yes, I'm still poor" (2013: Episode 84: 0:38), referring to that she is a student with loans, but was able to get a new phone for free because of a contract. In both works Elizabeth belongs to a similar social class relative to the time period. However, it is presented differently due to different methods of storytelling. As the events in the novel are told by an omniscient narrator, it is easier to describe Elizabeth's surroundings and how she is perceived by others, unlike in the video series where Lizzie spends most of her time alone in front of the camera telling her viewers these things herself.

All of Jane Austen's novels are founded on the characters' economic situations (Teachman 1997: 27). Thus, the Bennet family's monetary situation and social class are also mentioned on many occasions in the novel as presented above. Clothing can also imply someone's social class. Regarding the clothing that Lizzie in the series is wearing, it can be said that her clothing seems fairly new, clean and proper, but not manufactured for example by a luxury brand. This is also one of the indicators towards her monetary and social status. According to Voiret (2003: 231) the clothing styles of men and women were in a transitional phase at the time period of Jane Austen's novels. Although afterwards men's clothing became more simplistic while women's more ornamental, in Austen's time period the clothing styles of both men and women were neoclassically simple. There is little description of Elizabeth's clothing in the novel except for instances such as when she had walked a long way to see Jane and had dirtied her petticoat (Austen 1813/2008: 61). Bingley's sisters that witnessed this seemed shocked by Elizabeth's lack of care for the cleanliness of her clothing. This also serves as an indicator of Elizabeth's lower class compared to Bingley and her sisters. Thus, it can be deduced that Elizabeth and Lizzie share a similar socio-economic status, as neither of them seem overly concerned by their clothing.

In *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* episode 85, the story takes quite a different turn than the original novel. In it Lizzie has returned home and is waiting for Lydia to come back as well. After telling the viewers that neither their parents nor Jane know of the sextape, Lizzie reminisces about when Lydia was younger and becomes very emotional. Lizzie seems very protective of Lydia and seems to be blaming herself for Lydia's relationship with George (Wickham). Finally, when Lydia comes home, there is an agitated conversation between the sisters and it becomes clear that Lydia did not know the tape was going to go online. This episode is the first time in the series that Lizzie seems truly affectionate and caring towards her sister, as prior to this Lydia is presented as more of an annoying little sister.

In the novel, it is clearly presented that, at least by the reflections of Elizabeth, Wickham ran away with Lydia not to get married, but to have sex (Austen 1813/2008: 466). It is also pointed out that Lydia's feelings towards Wickham were quite a lot deeper than Wickham's towards Lydia, as she had thought they were going to get married from the beginning of their elopement (Austen 1813/2008: 508). At the end of episode 85 of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, as Lydia is realizing that her and George's sextape was about to be publicized, she mutters in disbelief that George loves her and would not do something like that (2013: Episode 85: 4:20). Thus, it can be concluded that George does not truly feel the same level of love towards Lydia as she does for him in the series

either. Looking at both of the works, it can be said that there is a big difference in Lydia's sexual escapades. In the novel, Lydia is naive and thinks that Wickham loves her and will marry her, though he would not have done that if he had not gotten money. In the series, George had told Lydia that she did not love him as much as he loved her and that she should prove her love by letting him film them having sex (Episode 87). In both of the works, there has thus been a sexual taboo that was broken. In the novel, this taboo is premarital sex, and as that is no longer a taboo at least in Western cultures in today's world, the series took the subject of sex and turned it into the sextape, which is seen as a taboo. In order to maintain a similar degree and type of taboo in the story, the makers of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* had to change the source of conflict into something more fitting for modern day society as issues regarding sexuality have become more acceptable.

5.3 Elizabeth and Jane have a discussion

In the novel, as Elizabeth has returned home, Jane greets her with a hug “whilst tears filled the eyes of both” (Austen 1813/2008: 457). Later, they discuss the events and voice wishes to have revealed Wickham's true character for everyone, while Elizabeth also criticizes Lydia on her thoughtlessness (Austen 1813/2008: 465-466). In episode 86 of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Lizzie had called Jane, told her what had happened and she had come home. In the episode, the sisters discuss the events and what has happened while Jane was working in Los Angeles.

In the series, Lizzie has heard of the website containing Lydia's sextape from her friend Charlotte, thus she is the one calling and telling Jane about it, whereas in the novel Jane is the one telling Elizabeth about Lydia's elopement in her letters. The reason this scene is particularly different in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* compared to *Pride and Prejudice* has to do with both the passage of time and the narrator of the scene. In the book, the narrator is omniscient and thus not showing the ongoing emotions from Elizabeth's point of view. In the series, Lizzie and her emotions are at the forefront, as she is the narrator. When discussing the events in the novel, Elizabeth for example says she and Jane should have revealed Wickham's true character for everyone, whilst in the series Lizzie blames everything on herself saying “I brought George into our lives” (2013: Episode 86: 2:17). Lizzie also expresses that it was her job to protect Lydia, after which Jane tells her to stop blaming herself and holds her. In this scene, there is a great difference to the novel although it is mentioned in the novel that Jane and Elizabeth hug when Elizabeth comes home. However, the encounter and conversation between the sisters in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is presented with much

more emotion. In the novel, the protective feelings Elizabeth has towards Lydia are presented in a more disgruntled manner as after reading Lydia's letter Elizabeth calls her thoughtless (Austen 1813/2008: 466), whereas in the series Lizzie enunciates her feelings of protectiveness towards Lydia. The passage of time between the works is apparent from the way in which romantic relationships are depicted. In *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth and Wickham both express interest to one another in a demure fashion, while Jane is at the same parties also interacting with Wickham. However, in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* Lizzie and George were briefly dating before George and Lydia's relationship began. During Lizzie and George's venture, Jane is not shown interacting with George all that much, thus she has no guilt. This contributes to Lizzie's feeling of guilt from bringing George into Lydia's life.

The relationship between Jane and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* compared to *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* has not changed considerably. One of the reasons might be that the character of Jane has not changed significantly in the adaptation process. Jane seems quite shy, loving and even tempered in both of the works. However, for example, in the novel Jane displays faith in Wickham's love for Lydia (Austen 1813/2008: 488-489), which she no longer does in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries'* episode 86. Thus, Jane's character in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is somewhat less gullible.

Education is one of the greatest differences between the characters Elizabeth, Jane and Lydia and their counterparts in the series. In Austen's works, there is a "greater separation of the classes and sexes, including renewed emphasis on the restriction of women to the domestic and local spheres." (Kelly 1998: 22). In the novel, Elizabeth is visiting their aunt and uncle and Jane is at home, before Lizzie getting the call from Charlotte; both women of the series are away from home because of education or career related reasons. This is something that would not have been possible for women two hundred years ago, and as Lizzie herself says, "All life doesn't revolve around men anymore! I can get a PhD. I can run a company. I can get one of those crappy mortgages and put myself into horrible, debilitating debt." (2012: Episode 9: 2:16).

5.4 Lydia grows up

In the novel, Lydia and Wickham have come to Longbourn after getting married. While there, Lydia is described as "untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy, and fearless. She turned from sister to sister, demanding their congratulations" (Austen 1813/2008: 504). Elizabeth is quite irritated by this

behaviour and leaves. Later, Lydia accidentally reveals that Darcy had been at her wedding (Austen 1813/2008: 503-510). As there is no wedding in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the events of this section are quite different. In episode 87, Lydia finally comes out of her room, where she has been for days after hearing about the sextape being published, and has an emotional conversation with Lizzie. In episode 88, it is revealed that the sextape site has been taken down, and episode 94 reveals that Darcy was the one responsible for taking it down.

While in Longbourn, in the novel, Lydia's behaviour towards her sisters is somewhat condescending. For example, when walking with the family, Lydia remarks, "Ah! Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower, because I am a married woman." (Austen 1813/2008: 506). There is no such behaviour by Lydia at any point in the video blog series, on the contrary, in episode 87 both Lydia and Lizzie show their vulnerability as they cry and lean on each other: Lizzie assuring Lydia that even if George does not love her, she does.

As there is, in fact, little interaction between Elizabeth and Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* altogether, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* presents their relationship a considerable amount. In episode 88, as Lydia comes to tell Lizzie that the site has been taken down, she also asks hesitantly if Lizzie had some time she could spend with her, to which Lizzie assures she does (2013: Episode 88: 3:45). In episode 94, after telling Lizzie that Darcy has taken down the website, Lydia opens up about how she had hoped it had been George, but how talking to Lizzie had made her feel better. Thus, in both of these episodes there is interaction between the sisters that does not exist in the novel. Lydia's character in the novel is presented as having a very one-sided way of being: reckless, impulsive and somewhat selfish with no soft side. Wiltshire (2001: 103) calls Lydia a "caricature" (along with the other one-sided characters in the novel – Mr Collins, Mrs Bennet and Lady Catherine) and says they "have no meaningful interaction with the outside world of others' feelings, and thus are stuck in a set of repetitive behavioural styles."

6. CONCLUSION

Jane Austen's works still have an impact on people two hundred years after their publication. As *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* showed, modern filmmakers use Austen's novels to explore marriage, finding a companion, or the anxiety of not finding one (Voiret 2003: 233-234). In addition to these, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* especially explores the sisters' behaviours and relationships with each other in modern times. Looking at the most substantial change that has been made to the sister characters from *Pride and Prejudice* to *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*; they have all gained independence. All of the sisters have been educated and are still studying or already entered working life. This is a tremendous difference to *Pride and Prejudice*, in which essentially the only option the women had was to get married or to be provided for by a man related to them (or in some cases both).

The relationships in the novel compared to the series are partially different, as Lydia is a great deal closer to Elizabeth in the web series. The characters themselves also have some differences, the biggest one being in Lydia's transformation from an unruly child to a young woman not afraid to open up and show her emotions, as in the novel she never has this transformation. The characters of Jane and Elizabeth have both gained some toughness and perseverance, mostly due to their increased independence.

As the length of this thesis is limited, I had to focus on parts of the novel and the adaptation that I chose to be the most crucial for me to be able to gain the answers to my research questions. These findings of this thesis might be of interest to those who are interested in Jane Austen's novels and their more modern adaptations, especially *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. As in addition to being a video blog series on YouTube, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* had side video blogs that were hosted by other characters in the series. Other social media platforms such as Twitter were also a part of the project as the characters had their own profiles and interaction in there as well. Thus, further research could be done on *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* from a social media viewpoint.

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